

ALA begins PATRIOT study to measure law enforcement activity in libraries

As homeland security tops the 109th Congress's list of priorities and parts of the PATRIOT Act are scheduled to sunset in December 2005, ALA seeks to ensure that library patron privacy is preserved. At the beginning of the year, ALA initiated a set of surveys to assess the impact of the USA PATRIOT Act on America's libraries and library patrons. Working with several teams of academic researchers, ALA is seeking to quantify and examine contacts by federal law enforcement agencies in public and academic libraries.

The results of these surveys will provide much-needed information to inform the debate about law enforcement's role in libraries and the effect that the law enforcement activity is having on library users. Preliminary results will be made available to members of Congress as they debate the status and necessity of the sunset provisions.

The Web-based surveys, titled "Impact and Analysis of Federal Law Enforcement Activity in Academic and Public Libraries," are directed at academic and public library administrators. The survey questions will examine the contacts being made by law enforcement in libraries, how library policies have changed since the passage of the USA PATRIOT Act, and any resulting changes in library patron behavior. The survey instrument has been carefully reviewed by counsel for the ALA to ensure that respondents do not violate the gag order imposed by the USA PATRIOT Act, and the U.S. Department of Justice has acknowledged its interest in the results of the project.

The team of researchers working in tandem with ALA have selected a diverse sample of U.S. public and academic libraries reflecting geographic, population, and size

differences. Administrators of the libraries selected for the study will be notified by mail. Libraries selected for the survey are strongly encouraged to respond.

The results of the studies will be presented as a report at the ALA's 2005 Annual meeting in Chicago. The results may be used to create an educational resource for practitioners on dealing with federal law enforcement.

President Bush announces FY2006 budget: LSTA receives \$15 million increase

On February 7th President Bush released his \$2.5 trillion FY 2006 budget that proposes cuts to non-defense, non-homeland security spending by nearly one percent.

Despite the extremely tight fiscal environment, the president's budget requests \$262,240,000 for the Institute of Museum and Library Services, an increase of \$21,565,000. For the Library Services and Technology Act, the budget includes \$221,325,000, an increase of \$15,374,000 from FY 2005. Within that total is nearly \$171 million for Grants to State Library Agencies, \$26 million for Librarians for the 21st Century program, \$14 million for National Leadership Grants for libraries, and \$3.675 million for Improving Library Service to Native Americans.

Overall, the president's FY 2006 budget would cut education funding by \$530 million, or 0.9 percent for a total of \$56.0 billion. Despite proposed increases for Title I, Striving Readers Initiative, and special education, the budget would cut or eliminate more than 150 programs, 48 of which are education programs. The president proposes cutting funding for adult education by \$369.7 million, or 63 percent, from \$585.4 million in FY 2005 to \$215.7 million.

The budget does not take into account the military costs incurred in Iraq and Afghanistan; the price of making the president's first-term tax cuts permanent or his proposed overhaul of Social Security. *zz*

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